

our seniors, to take care of our children, to invest in innovation, to protect our homeland, to spread democracy, and to do all those critical things that we want to do?

These are the facts, Mr. Speaker. I encourage the American people to draw their own conclusions based on the facts—not hyperbole, not conversations from either side, not political rhetoric, but from the facts.

So, as I have laid out our debt situation, I would ask that you send me your ideas on what you think the numbers should be. This is the people's House. We see how they feel in the polls, but we need to hear their stories directly from them, Mr. Speaker. I will request that the American people send me those stories, tell me about their hardships, tell me if they think they're paying too much. But give me a specific example. Tell me how that tax rate, that tax liability, that tax burden affected your family. I want to know. I think Congress wants to know. We don't presume, and I certainly don't presume to know everything. I think it's very critical.

My grandmother told me a long time ago, Mr. Speaker, smart people know what they know and know what they don't know. I'm telling you today that I don't know everything, and I'm willing to listen to the people that do.

After all, we need everyone's creativity, everyone's inventiveness, everyone's ideas if we're going to keep this country great. This is America, home of amazing structural feats: The San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge in California, the Hoover Dam on the Arizona and Nevada border, Mount Rushmore in South Dakota. This is America, one of the most inventive nations in the world. We brought the world bifocals and the modern suspension bridge, dental floss and the doorbell, the airplane and peanut butter. America brought the world the defibrillator and the traffic light, digital recording and the Super Soaker water gun, the artificial heart and the personal computer.

This is America, a Nation of firsts and a Nation where our inventive spirit rings from sea to shining sea. This is America, where we do big things because we have big ideas. As President Obama said in this year's State of the Union Address: We're a Nation that says, I might not have a lot of money, but I have this great idea for a new invention; I might not come from a family of college graduates, but I will be the first to get my degree; I might not know those people in trouble, but I think I can help them, and I need to try; I'm not sure how we'll reach that better place beyond the horizon, but I know we'll get there. I know we will. We do big things.

Those were President Obama's words from the State of the Union in which he laid a course of where we are, where we need to get to, and why we all know we'll get there.

Mr. Speaker, again, I wish I could directly address the American people. If I

could, again, I would invite them to reach out to me on Facebook, on Twitter, or by email. Email me at myidea@mail.house.gov.

We've been through rough patches before and we got through them because we're Americans. We will work together and we will listen to the American people. Our perseverance, ingenuity, creativity, and work ethic are unmatched. We're going to get through this because of our people.

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the opportunity to travel to Afghanistan, Batumi, and Baku, and over there I just want to say that the energy and the optimism in our troops were unmatched because they were representing America. They were representing what that flag stands for. They were representing the sacrifice that stands in this country's history.

□ 1950

We didn't always get it right since our founding, but we've always, always made it a goal to strive to be a more perfect union. I hope that through this conversation, we will continue to pursue being a more perfect union.

I want to take a detour for a second and just thank the New Orleans Hornets and thank their GM, Dave Dickerson, who when they found out that I was going over to Afghanistan to visit with some troops, that they sent care packages and T-shirts and bands and stickers and magazines to our troops because they understood the sacrifice that our troops were making and they wanted to make sure that they participated in just saying to our Louisiana troops, thank you, job well done, we appreciate your sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, thank you for allowing me the time to have a conversation with you about what I believe the American people stand for, about the greatness we have inside ourselves, about the great things that I know we can do when we stand together. And thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to invite the American people to participate and become their own representative in this Congress and talk about their ideas and express their desires, their wishes and what they're willing to sacrifice and those things they think we need to do.

I yield back the balance of my time.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. EMERSON (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for May 2 and the balance of the week on account of flooding in her district.

Mr. BILIRAKIS (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of attending the funeral of a family member.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 52 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, May 5, 2011, at 9 a.m.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1393. A letter from the Deputy to the Chairman, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Procedures for Monitoring Bank Secrecy Act Compliance and Fair Credit Reporting: Technical Amendments (RIN: 3064-AD76) received April 6, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

1394. A letter from the Deputy Director for Operations, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's final rule — Allocation of Assets in Single-Employer Plans; Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Valuing and Paying Benefits received April 6, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

1395. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Planning Resource Adequacy Assessment Reliability Standard [Docket No.: RM10-10-000; Order No. 747] received April 6, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1396. A letter from the Deputy General Counsel, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Mandatory Reliability Standards for Interconnection Reliability Operating Limits [Docket No.: RM10-15-000; Order No. 748] received April 6, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1397. A letter from the FWS Chief, Branch of Aquatic Invasive Species, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Injurious Wildlife Species; Listing the Bighead Carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*) as Injurious Fish [Docket No.: FWS-R3-FHC-2010-0094; 94140-1342-0000-N5] (RIN: 1018-AT49) received March 23, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1398. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife Parks, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Special Regulation: Areas of the National Park System, National Capital Region (RIN: 1024-AD96) received March 23, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1399. A letter from the Chief, Endangered Species Listing, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for *Carex lutea* (Golden Sedge) [Docket No.: FWS-R4-ES-2010-0003] (RIN: 1018-AW55) received April 4, 2011, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1400. A letter from the Chief, Branch of Recovery and Delisting, Department of the Interior, transmitting the Department's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removal of *Erigeron maguirei* (Maguire Daisy) from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Plants; Availability of Final Post-Delisting Monitoring Plan [Docket No.: FWS-R6-ES-2008-0001]